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## ANCON HOSPITAL, PANAMA CANAL

BY GERTRUDE MOLLOY, R.N.

*Detroit, Michigan*

**A**NCON HOSPITAL, a most interesting institution, originated in 1883, under the supervision of the French Sisters of Charity. Since 1904, when the construction of the Canal was undertaken by the Americans and the hospital was taken over by the United States Government, it has made possible the accomplishment of the greatest engineering feat of the age through the indomitable spirit and splendid courage of General Gorgas and his staff who mastered the dreaded tropical fevers that claimed so many victims during the construction period.

This institution is the largest on the western hemisphere south of the United States and is considered the most beautiful in the world. It handles any class of cases, as it has all the modern equipment and apparatus associated with a hospital for the diagnosis of operative and medical diseases. Virtually all the civilian and military patients of the zone are treated here, also many people from the Republic of Panama, Central and South America as well as some persons of international note.

The hospital is situated on the northern and eastern slope of Ancon Hill overlooking Panama Bay. The grounds are terraced and the landscape gardening beautifully executed, making the environment pleasing to both the sick and well. Many varieties of tropical plants and flowers of brilliant hue and shades planted here and there create a harmony of color and enchanting beauty. The group of buildings comprising the hospital is patterned from the architecture of the Italian Renaissance. Porches connect the sections and wards, and rooms are shielded from the tropical sun and rain by wide corridors. The buildings are carefully protected against insects by copper screens.

The nurses' home is an attractive three-story concrete building with a large reception room and individual rooms, furnishing homey and comfortable quarters for eighty nurses. The attractiveness of the quarters is increased by a wide veranda accessible from each room. The home overlooks Bella Vista Beach and the Tivoli Hotel, made famous in Rex Beach's popular story, "The Ne'er Do Well."

The nurses are appointed through civil service examination. The work in the hospital is the general nursing care of the patients, in which the nurses are assisted by one hundred and twenty-six attendants and forty-six maids, mostly splendidly trained Jamaicans.

In the early days of the construction of the Canal the nurses faced trying conditions, for the dreaded malarial fever claimed many victims among the workers of the canal. These splendid women endured the hardships and battled against odds, giving little or no thought to the dangers they were facing. Today the method of eliminating the mosquito has been so perfected that one would never contract the disease within the Canal Zone, but outside these few miles the fever still lurks and the possibility of contracting it makes a journey into the jungles or adjoining towns a hazardous thing.

With the changing conditions of the nursing profession in its development and striving for higher ideals, the hospital has met the demands and today the nursing corps of Ancon Hospital has expanded and grown with the profession and strives to bear in mind the fundamental teachings of the nurse's early training of service and charity toward the afflicted.

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## YESTERDAY AND TODAY

A Tale of Two Hospital Experiences in One Woman's Life

BY MARY F. LAIRD, R.N.

*Rochester, N. Y.*

OUR neighbor tapped on the window as I was passing and had the door open before I reached it. She was sobbing as if her heart would break and saying, "I can't possibly let her go to that awful hospital." Between her sobs she told that she was to take her sister to the hospital that afternoon and that she was to be operated upon in the morning.

Then followed the story and the reason for her dread: "I shall never forget the day over ten years ago that they operated on my father. It was the most awful experience I ever had. They took him to the operating room an hour before his turn came and mother and I sat outside in a dark, gloomy hall watching people come and go with never a smile. They just rushed in and out, and of course we thought they started to work on father as soon as he was inside of the door. After three hours of that agony, hearing him groan, as we thought, I began asking everybody who came out of that room how my father was or if he were dead. They would all shake their heads mysteriously and say they did not work there. At last after four hours had passed both doors opened suddenly and a wheeled stretcher was whisked through the hall, upon which lay my father, white and moaning. Mother and I stood there dazed, not knowing